

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the application, as amended, in view of the following remarks.

The present invention as set forth in **amended Claim 4** relates to a method for preventing aging of the skin or improving the skin, comprising:

contacting skin with an skin aging-preventing or improving agent thereby increasing an expression level of Rho kinase or myosin light-chain kinase in the skin;

wherein said agent comprises of a substance capable of increasing an expression level of Rho kinase or myosin light-chain kinase;

wherein said substance is a plant, a part of a plant, an extract of a plant, and extract of a part of a plant or a combination thereof;

wherein, if said plant is present, an amount of said plant as reduced to dry weight is 0.00001 to 5 wt.% based on the total amount of said agent; and

wherein, if said extract of said plant is present, an amount of said extract of said plant as reduced to solid content is 0.00001 to 5 wt.% based on the total amount of the agent.

In contrast, JP 2000-178168 fails to disclose or suggest a method as claimed. All that JP 2000-178168 discloses is that an elastase activity inhibitor and cosmetic composition each comprise one or more kinds of plant oils extracted from, for example, *Schisandra chinensis*.

In addition, there is no disclosure or suggestion of the amount of from 0.01 to 10 mg/cm² in which the agent is applied to the skin, as claimed in Claim 6.

Further there is no disclosure or suggestion of the substance capable of enhancing the expression level of Rho kinase or myosin light-chain kinase which is a plant selected from the group consisting of *Althaea officinalis*, *Curcuma longa*, *Actinidia chinensis*, *Gentiana lutea*, *Crataegus cuneata*, *Rehmannia glutinosa*, *Syzygium aromaticum*, *Calendula officinalis*, *Rose canina*, *Petroselinum sativum*, *Hamamelis virginiana*, *Asiasarum sieboldii*, *Thymus*

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serpyllum, Hypericum perforatum, Sophora flavescens, Cnidium officinale, Zizyphus jujuba, Citrus unshiu, Angelica acutiloba, Fucus vesiculosus, Tilia platyllos, Humulus lupulus, Citrus limon, Cassia obatusifolia, Magnolia obovata, Evodia rutaecarpa, Schisandrachinensis, Cornus officinalis, Atractylodes japonica, Digeneasimplex, and mixtures thereof; or an extract of said plant as claimed in Claim 7.

Even further, there is no disclosure or suggestion of the substance capable of enhancing the expression level of Rho kinase or myosin light-chain kinase which is a plant part selected from the group consisting of root, rhizome, or leaf for *Althaea officinalis*; rhizome for *Curcuma longa*; fruit for *Actinidia chinensis*; root or rhizome for *Gentiana lutea*; fruit for *Crataeguscuneata*; root for *Rehmannia glutinosa*; bud for *Syzygium aromaticum*; head flower for *Calendula officinalis*; fruit for *Rose canina*; leaf for *Petroselinum sativum*; leaf or bark for *Hamamelis virginiana*; root or rhizome for *Asiasarum sieboldii*; aerial part for *Thymus serpyllum*; aerial part for *Hypericum perforatum*; root for *Sophora flavescens*; rhizome for *Cnidium officinale*; fruit for *Zizyphus jujuba*; fruit skin for *Citrus unshiu*; root for *Angelica acutiloba*; whole plant for *Fucus vesiculosus*; flower or leaf for *Tilia platyllos*; female inflorescence for *Humulus lupulus*; fruit for *Citrus limon*; and the parts described in Japanese Pharmacopoeia for *Cassia obatusifolia, Magnolia obovata, Evodia rutaecarpa, Schisandrachinensis, Cornus officinalis, Atractylodes japonica, and Digeneasimplex* as claimed in Claim 9.

Therefore, the rejection of Claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by JP 2000-178168 is believed to be unsustainable as the present invention is neither anticipated nor obvious and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

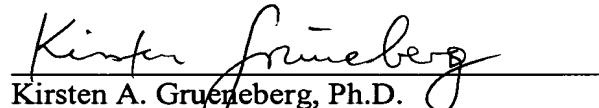
The rejections of Claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, 1st and 2nd paragraphs, is obviated by the amendment of the claim.

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This application presents allowable subject matter, and the Examiner is kindly requested to pass it to issue. Should the Examiner have any questions regarding the claims or otherwise wish to discuss this case, he is kindly invited to contact Applicants' below-signed representative, who would be happy to provide any assistance deemed necessary in speeding this application to allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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